

Claims:

1 1. A moisture-absorbing material comprising a natural
2 cellulosic material defined by hollow fibrous tubes that have
3 been sequentially (i) dried, (ii) combed in a direction to
4 substantially longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes,
5 (iii) stretched substantially in said direction, (iv) twisted
6 substantially about said direction, and (v) compressed
7 substantially in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of
8 said natural cellulosic material is greatest along said
9 direction.

1 2. A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 1 further
2 comprising a powder material adhering to and residing within
3 said hollow fibrous tubes, said powder material being inert
4 with respect to said natural cellulosic material and
5 initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein
6 a product of said chemical reaction is water.

1 3. A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 1 wherein said
2 natural cellulosic material is cotton.

1 4. A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 2 wherein said
2 powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a
3 mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture

4 of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

1 5. A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 2 wherein said
2 powder material is selected such that another product of said
3 chemical reaction is gaseous.

1 6. A moisture-absorbing material comprising:

2 hollow fibrous tubes of cotton that have been
3 sequentially (i) dried, (ii) combed in a direction to
4 substantially longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes
5 of cotton, (iii) stretched in said direction, (iv) twisted
6 about said direction, and (v) compressed in said direction,
7 wherein a dried-in strain of said hollow fibrous tubes of
8 cotton is greatest along said direction; and

9 a powder material adhering to and residing within said
10 hollow fibrous tubes of cotton, said powder material being
11 inert with respect to said hollow fibrous tubes of cotton and
12 initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein
13 a product of said chemical reaction is water.

1 7. A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 6 wherein said
2 powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a
3 mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture
4 of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

1 8. A moisture-absorbing material as in claim 6 wherein said
2 powder material is selected such that another product of said
3 chemical reaction is gaseous.

1 9. A method of making a moisture-absorbing material
2 comprising the steps of:

3 providing a natural cellulosic material that is defined
4 by hollow fibrous tubes;

5 drying said natural cellulosic material;

6 combing, after said step of drying, said natural
7 cellulosic material in a direction to substantially
8 longitudinally align said hollow fibrous tubes;

9 stretching, after said step of combing, said hollow
10 fibrous tubes substantially in said direction;

11 twisting, after said step of stretching is commenced,
12 said hollow fibrous tubes substantially about said direction;
13 and

14 compressing, after said step of twisting, said hollow
15 fibrous tubes in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of
16 said natural cellulosic material is greatest along said
17 direction.

1 10. A method according to claim 9 further comprising the
2 step of mixing a powder material with said hollow fibrous
3 tubes wherein said powder material adheres to and resides in
4 said hollow fibrous tubes, said powder material being inert
5 with respect to said natural cellulosic material and
6 initiating a chemical reaction when exposed to water, wherein
7 a product of said chemical reaction is water.

1 11. A method according to claim 9 wherein said natural
2 cellulosic material is cotton.

1 12. A method according to claim 10 wherein said powder
2 material is selected from the group consisting of: a mixture
3 of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture of
4 sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

1 13. A method according to claim 9 wherein said powder
2 material is selected such that another product of said
3 chemical reaction is gaseous.

1 14. A method of making a moisture-absorbing material
2 comprising the steps of:

3 providing cotton in the form of hollow fibrous tubes
4 thereof;

5 drying said cotton;

6 mixing, during said step of drying, a powder material
7 with said hollow fibrous tubes wherein said powder material
8 adheres to and resides in said hollow fibrous tubes, said
9 powder material being inert with respect to said natural
10 cellulosic material and initiating a chemical reaction when
11 exposed to water, wherein a product of said chemical reaction
12 is water;

13 combing, after said step of drying, said cotton in a
14 direction to substantially longitudinally align said hollow
15 fibrous tubes;

16 stretching, after said step of combing, said hollow
17 fibrous tubes substantially in said direction;

18 twisting, at least after said step of stretching is
19 commenced, said hollow fibrous tubes substantially about said
20 direction; and

21 compressing, after said step of twisting, said hollow
22 fibrous tubes in said direction, wherein a dried-in strain of
23 said cotton is greatest along said direction.

15. A method according to claim 14 wherein said powder material is selected from the group consisting of: a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and citric acid; and a mixture of sodium bicarbonate and potassium hydrogen tartrate.

1 16. A method according to claim 14 wherein said powder
2 material is selected such that another product of said
3 chemical reaction is gaseous.